

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
09/875,730	6th June 2001	Pratik Kumar NAHATA	2000P07678U501
DATE OF RESPONSE	ART UNIT	EXAMINER	
8th June 2004	2157	Yves DALENCOURT	

1. – 7. CANCELLED

8. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:

a capaciflective sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a
predetermined distance about a vehicle port;

a lock for securing the port;

a latch for controlling opening and closing of said port; and

a control unit in communication with said capaciflective sensor, said control unit for
controlling the actuation of said lock;

[[~~The vehicle port control system of Claim 7~~]] wherein said latch includes a sensor in communication with said control unit, said sensor for detecting movement of said latch.

9. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 8 wherein said sensor is an infrared sensor.

10. – 18. CANCELLED

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19. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:

a vehicle port;

a capaciflective sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a predetermined distance about said port;

a latch controlling opening and closing of said port; and

a control unit in communication with said capaciflective sensor, said control unit for comparing a signal from said capaciflective sensor with a predetermined threshold;

[[The vehicle port control system of Claim 18]] wherein said latch includes a sensor in communication with said control unit, said sensor for detecting movement of said latch.

20. (Previously Presented) A method of port control comprising the steps of:

establishing a voltage on a first surface;

establishing about the same voltage on a second surface spaced from the first surface;

establishing a lower voltage on a third surface spaced from the second surface, thereby propagating an electric field from the first surface, around the second surface, and to the third surface;

sensing changes in the electric field caused by the presence of an object in the electric field;

generating an electric signal based on the changes in the electric field;

comparing the electric signal to a predetermined threshold; and

controlling a port based on the comparison.

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21. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:
a capaciflective sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a
predetermined distance about a vehicle port;
a lock for securing the port; and
a control unit in communication with said capaciflective sensor, said control unit for
controlling the actuation of said lock;
 [[~~The vehicle port control system of Claim 1~~]] wherein said capaciflective sensor
 comprises a first surface, a second surface and a third surface, said first surface having a first
 voltage about the same as a second voltage on said second surface, said third surface having a
 third voltage lower than said first surface.
22. (Currently Amended) The vehicle [[~~part~~]] port control system of Claim 21 wherein said
 second surface is spaced between said first surface and said third surface.
23. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:
a capaciflective sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a
predetermined distance about a vehicle port;
a lock for securing the port; and
a control unit in communication with said capaciflective sensor, said control unit for
controlling the actuation of said lock;
 [[~~The vehicle port control system of Claim 1~~]] wherein said capaciflective sensor is
 oriented to direct the electric field away from said lock.